

MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DENISE JUNEAU, SUPERINTENDENT

STANDARDS-BASED DEFINITIONS

1. CONTENT STANDARDS:

Content standards indicate what all students should know, understand, and be able to do in a specific content area, such as reading, mathematics, or social studies.

2. BENCHMARKS:

Benchmarks define our expectations for students' knowledge and skills along a developmental continuum in each content area. That continuum is focused at three points – the end of grade 4, the end of grade 8, and upon graduation (grade 12).

3. PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS:

Performance descriptors define how well students apply knowledge and skills. Performance descriptors are the specific expectations for performance in each content area at each of the three benchmarks, grades 4 and 8, and upon graduation.

4. PERFORMANCE LEVELS:

Performance levels define the achievement in broad, general terms. "How well can a student apply the content and context knowledge and thinking and reasoning skills?"

- **NOVICE:**

This level denotes that the student is beginning to attain the prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for work at each benchmark.

- **NEARING PROFICIENCY:**

This level denotes that the student has partial mastery or prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at each benchmark.

- **PROFICIENT:**

This level denotes solid academic performance for each benchmark. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

- **ADVANCED:**

This level denotes superior performance.

5. ESSENTIAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:

The Essential Learning Expectations are specific statements of what all students should know and be able to do at a grade level. It measures student progress toward meeting a Benchmark.

- Essential Vocabulary – vocabulary that students must know and apply to successfully meet the essential learning expectation
- Performance Rubric – A set of criteria describing students' performance, along a continuum from advanced to novice, that define how well they apply the knowledge and skills contained in the Essential Learning Expectations.
- Foundational Knowledge and Skills for End of Grade 10- Foundational Knowledge and Skills denoted in The Essential Learning Expectations designate a Grade 10 checkpoint to measure student progress toward successfully meeting the content standards and Upon Graduation benchmarks. The Foundational Knowledge and Skills for end of grade 10 were determined by a community of Montana educators and are identified with the ⑩ symbol. This denotation provides guidance for focused instruction and assessment.